



SENATOR
BILL HARDIMAN

E-Hardiman Herald



*Chair, Families & Human
Services Committee
Appropriations Committee:
Chair, Family Independence
Agency, Commerce Labor
& Economic Development,
Capitol Outlay,
Higher Education*

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HARDIMAN INTRODUCES SEVERAL NEW LEGISLATIVE IDEAS

Over the last few weeks Senator Bill Hardiman has introduced several important pieces of legislation. Senate Bill 307, which would require physicians to perform ultrasounds on women considering abortions, Senate Bill 358, which creates a Life Sciences Investment Authority, and Senate Bill 352, which allows Michigan companies to participate in mail-order prescriptions.

Along with requiring physicians to perform ultrasounds on women considering abortions, SB 307 more importantly requires the physicians to show them the ultrasound, and to provide them a hard copy of it. This bill could be an important way to talk about the compelling impact of ultrasounds, and how women who see them are more likely to realize the implications of their actions. SB 307 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health Policy.

The authority that would be created by SB 358, would be appointed by the Governor with Senate confirmation, and would basically invest in life sciences products and research. The two main powers of the authority would be hiring an investment management company to guide the investment strategy and issuing bonds to finance the work. The revenue stream for the bonds would initially be existing life sciences corridor appropriations, and eventually revenue from the repayment of investments made in life sciences research or development. Senate Bill 358 has been referred to the Senate Committee of Commerce and Labor.

Senate Bill 352, allows for "centralized prescription processing" services by Michigan firms. This bill also strikes the present ban on mail order services by Michigan pharmacists similar to the provisions of SB 146 which the Senate passed a few weeks ago. The centralized prescription processing services would have to meet specific standards outlined in the bill on such matters as tracking the preparation of each prescription, privacy security measures and an audit trail for the preparation and dispensing of the drugs. SB 352 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health Policy.

EXECUTIVE ORDER AGREEMENT REACHED

Last week both the Michigan House and Senate compromised on an Executive Order with the Governor. The overall agreement corrects an anticipated \$380 million hole in the current year

general fund budget. In fact, a supplemental budget HB 4308, was approved last week as well. HB 4308 appropriates a total of \$684.6 million, yet most of the funds are divided between two areas: \$33.5 million for capital outlay (including \$202 million in federal money for airport improvements) and \$245 million in federal money for Medicaid payments.

The supplemental also includes a \$39.8 million general fund increase to cover Medicaid payments for an increased caseload. While the EO totals to \$303 million, \$8 million of the funds are in special purpose revenues to the Departments of Labor and Economic Growth and Human Services.

The largest cut in the EO is \$99.5 million in general fund revenues to the state's K-12 school aid fund. This reduction, however will not actually reduce spending to schools because the earmarked taxes going to the fund are higher than expected.

The Department of Community Health budget is cut by \$63.6 million. \$25.9 million of this budget is general fund spending offset by spending from the Medicaid Benefits Trust Fund. The executive order also calls for cuts of \$6 million to be offset with a 6 percent provider tax on community mental health providers which will have to be enacted in a separate statute, and another \$7.2 million in cuts by fund shifts to other local and state restricted revenue sources.

Another \$25.9 million would come in cuts to the state's 15 four-year universities, allocated as an across the board 1.76 percent cut for each university. Each of the state's community colleges will also see 1.76 percent cuts in their operational funding, totaling \$4.9 million. Under the agreement, the universities will get the first shot at having the funding restored. If the May revenue estimating conference finds that revenues have increased, then the funding will be restored at that time. If the funding can be restored when book closing is completed, it will be done at that time. If the funds cannot be restored at all, then \$100 million in additional bonding will be made available to the universities next year.

The Department of Corrections budget would be cut in the supplemental by \$19 million with \$3 million coming in facilities closing – the Mangum Farm Barracks in Marquette, Camp Tuscola in Caro and Camp Sauble in Freesoil – and \$2.8 million in reducing the security levels at five prisons. Another \$318,100 would be cut by closing the Saginaw Corrections Center.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RULES ON DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS

State and local governments and other public entities are constitutionally barred from offering benefits to partners of employees in “marriage-like” relationships, Attorney General Mike Cox ruled last Wednesday in an opinion aimed at provisions for same-sex couples. The opinion addressed an issue that was the subject of furious debate prior to voter approval in November of a constitutional amendment banning recognition of gay marriage for any purpose.

Any labor contracts currently in effect that provide for those domestic benefits – for either same sex or heterosexual unions – are not overturned but future contracts by state and local governments could not include benefits based on “marriage-like” unions.

The opinion ([No. 7171](#)) holds out the possibility that benefits could be offered to individuals employees designate, so long as the designation is not in the context of a marriage or a union to act in lieu of a marriage.

SENATOR HARDIMAN DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held on the first Monday of each month from 10:00am – 11:30am throughout the 29th district. On Monday, April 4 Senator Hardiman will be holding monthly district office hours at Keiser's Kitchen, 700 E. Main, Lowell, MI 49331. Be sure to talk to the Senator at these upcoming office hours:

- ▶ Monday, May 2, Baxter Community Center, 935 Baxter SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506
- ▶ Monday, June 6, Kentwood Library, 4700 Kalamazoo SE, Kentwood, MI 49508.

Senator Hardiman will hold this time each month so constituents of the 29th district have an opportunity to speak to him about any questions or concerns they may have regarding state issues. You can also contact Senator Hardiman via his toll-free number: 1-866-305-2129 or e-mail: senbhardiman@senate.michigan.gov to set-up a meeting outside of the district hours.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Hardiman Herald is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of Senator Bill Hardiman's activity in Lansing. If you have any questions, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

Mail: P.O. Box 30036 Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

Toll-Free Phone: (866) 305-2129

Fax: (517) 373-5801

E-mail: senbhardiman@senate.michigan.gov.

Website: www.senate.state.mi.us/gop/senator/hardiman/